

Inside Seven

APRIL 2000

Caltrans DISTRICT 7 EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

GRAY DAVIS, GOVERNOR

MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET, SECRETARY, BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY

JOSÉ MEDINA, DIRECTOR

CALTRANS "FAMILY" MOURNS ONE OF ITS OWN

The dangers of freeway and highway work were once again brought to the forefront as Caltrans Director José Medina offered condolences to the family of Charles Deming, 46, a Maintenance Worker who was killed while in the line of duty. Deming was working on Highway 39 in the northern mountains of Los Angeles County early Wednesday, February 23 when his fatal accident occurred. "The thoughts and prayers of the entire Caltrans "family" are with Charles Deming's wife and three daughters at this very difficult time. While no words can truly express our collective sense of loss, we will always carry with us the knowledge that Charles Deming was a public servant in the truest and finest sense of the term," Medina said. "He will be missed."

Deming, a 20-year Caltrans veteran, was a Maintenance Leadworker at the Monrovia Maintenance Station for the past eight years and was considered very experienced in his field. He also worked as an Equipment Operator and Leadworker at the Altadena Maintenance yard in earlier years. He was fatally injured in the early morning hours of February 23 while working the night shift on the mountainous Highway 39 above Crystal Lake in the Angeles National Forest, keeping the roadway clear of debris from the current storms and safe for the motoring public. Deming was assigned to a storm watch road repair crew which responds to emergency calls overnight.

Maintenance crews work days as well as nights during rain and snowstorms clearing drains and removing rocks, sand,



Charles Deming, sadly killed in the line of duty while serving the motoring public of the State of California.

mud and other debris from the roadway for the safety of the motoring public. They also sand any ice that may be on the highway. He was scheduled to return to the Maintenance yard by 6 a.m. When he did not return, workers immediately began searching the area.

According to Roy Pool, East Region Maintenance Manager, Supervisor Bill Larson saw scrapes on the roadway, looked over the side and saw that Deming's truck had plunged 300 feet over an embankment and down a ravine. The last contact with Deming was around 4 a.m. when he said he would take another trip up the mountain to ensure the roadway was clear for motorists before coming back down to the yard. It was reported to have been raining, but not freezing. It is unknown at this time what caused the fatal accident.

A memorial service was held Monday, February 28 in Altadena. Some 200 persons attended, many of them Caltrans employees. Bob Sassaman, District Director, said, "It is a sad day for the Caltrans "family" when we lose one of our own. Charles Deming was an outstanding employee dedicated to his job of keeping the canyon roadway safe for motorists. He will be missed by all of us." Roy Pool, East Region Maintenance Manager added, "Charles was an exemplary employee. He could always be counted on. He was always there when you needed him and was a respected employee, as well as a good friend to many of his co-workers. Charles enjoyed his job and he was proud to be a Caltrans employee. He will be missed."

Joseph Herandez, a co-worker, also expressed his profound sadness at the loss. He said, "It's an all-around shame when anything like this happens. You could tell he was a good guy by the way

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THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Iwould like to take a moment to thank everyone at the District Office Building for their patience and understanding while the escalators and elevators are being repaired. While I realize it has been frustrating for many, the minimal complaints I have received are a real testimony to the exceptional quality of employees we have here at District 7. I am appreciative of the spirit in which Caltrans employees continue to do the highest quality of work, even under less than optimum conditions. While I had kidded that this office will have the most fit employees because of the use of our stairs, I do realize that it has been a hardship for some. And we are all doing our best to get the situation remedied.

The governor's budget has funds for design engineering of a new building and we are still looking at the Main Street Parking lot as the site. It will still be several years before we can occupy a new building, but progress is being made.

Hopefully, by the time this newsletter is published, the elevators and escalators will be operational once again. In the meantime, thank you all for your patience, understanding and support of management while the systems are being repaired.

Recently, Cindy Quon, former District Division Chief, Program and Project Management, accepted a position at the Orange County Transportation Authority. While we are very sorry to see Cindy move on, we thank her for her many valuable contributions and wish her the very best of luck in her new endeavors. Even though Caltrans loses good people like Cindy Quon, when it comes time to work together with other local agencies, the understanding of what Caltrans is all about makes for an excellent working relationship with our partners in transportation.

Also, thank you all for your hard work in meeting project delivery. District 7 has an extensive program this year with some major-sized projects. The dedication and extra hours which have gone into these projects has not gone unnoticed. What happens in Districts 4 and 7 really control the majority of the state's transportation funds, as these two districts administer the bulk of the major projects. I appreciate all the excellent work by the functional managers and others that has gone into meeting project delivery this year and for the coming years as we keep California on the move!

Although I usually take the train to work every day, I happened to drive in one morning recently in the pouring rain. What I began to reflect upon during the downpour was all of our Caltrans Maintenance Workers "out there" on the job, the amount of time they put in and the hours they work, particularly in the rain, ice and snow. Sometimes they are required to work around the clock doing an amazing job of maintaining our state freeway and highway system.

For it was Chuck Deming, a Maintenance Worker from the Altadena Maintenance Yard, who lost his life in the line of duty while serving the motoring public on a rainy morning this past February. He was part of the storm watch crew who are always on call to respond to emergencies, including overnight assignments. Mr. Deming was almost through with his night shift, but wanted to make one last trip up the mountain to ensure the road was clean and safe. When he did not return, his vehicle was later found 300 feet down a ravine. The fact that such an experienced, reliable and safety-conscious employee lost his life in this manner ever reminds us that Caltrans Maintenance Workers are not only faced with the everyday dangers of their jobs, but with the ravages of "mother nature" as well. While it is still unclear what caused his accident, what is clear is that Mr. Deming and countless others just like him have faced hazards each

and every workday above and beyond the duties of their job descriptions — sometimes due to inclement weather and road rage, for example. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all of them. Caltrans is proud to have a dedicated corps of unsung heroes keeping our roadways clean and safe for all commuters.

I have been extremely impressed over the years how Caltrans employees have been supportive of each other in times of need, and this tragedy is no exception. A large number of the Caltrans "family," many in their orange uniforms, were present to show their support at Mr. Deming's memorial service. And the Deming family has received countless notes and flowers and other forms of support. At a visit to the family home, the Demings expressed their appreciation and said they are overwhelmed by the support given to them by Caltrans employees.

In addition, the California Transportation Foundation (CTF) has established a memorial fund to assist the Deming family in their time of need. Mr. Deming left a wife and three daughters. Contributions, large and small, will help them. Donations should be sent to: CTF Worker Memorial Fund, at P.O. Box 163453, Sacramento, CA, 95816. Checks should be made out to "CTF Worker Memorial Fund," with a designation in the lower left-hand corner of the check reading, "In Memory of Charles Deming." Everyone is encouraged to continue their support of the Deming family through your thoughts, prayers and contributions to the CTF. •

ROBERT W. SASSAMAN
District Director

CORRECTION

The title of Joe Hernandez on the cover photo caption of the March, 2000 issue of *Inside Seven* was omitted in error. It should have read "Joe Hernandez, Leadworker."

District Museum Needs Something Old, Something New

In preparation for establishing a future District 7 Museum, Mike Perovich, Chief, Office of Design, Branch C, and a Museum Committee are now accepting donations of interesting and important items of a historical nature related to District 7. Included on their wish list are such things as drafting and survey equipment, early manuals, pre-computer equipment, pre-1980 Standard Specifications and plans, photographs, paper ephemera, etc. "No questions asked," said Perovich of where the items might come from. "Just bring them in; we'll take them all. And don't overlook the new items too."

Specifically, the types of material wanted for the museum deal with:

- Timeline of District 7
- History of geographical limits of the district
- Retirees' memorabilia
- Maps of roadway inventory at approximately ten-year intervals
- Public Affairs/media promotional materials, news clippings, radio/TV shows
- History of the branches (e.g., components of Engineering Services in times past)
- Technology used (ink lettering pens, Leroy's, CADD)
- Drawing styles and materials used from different periods (vellum, mylar, disk)
- Field equipment (survey instruments, etc.)
- Photographs of personnel in all areas, at work and play (picnics)
- Papers from events
- History of major projects (I-105, earthquake response, etc.)
- Manuals and specs throughout the years
- Awards
- Oral histories
- Interviews of all living District Directors and Division Chiefs on audio or video tape
- Collections of news footage and other historical documentation
- Press releases
- Interviews of retired personnel reminiscing about their work at the district
- Collections of virtually any old paper or article about Caltrans (timesheets, tickets to picnics, manuals, memos, notes, announcements, etc.)

When Cornell Kimball, Transportation



Left to right: Mike Perovich displays the Mantua Rolling Rule; Cornell Kimball shows off the museum's first acquisition, the Mantua Vernier protractor; and Ralph Ricketson has the mountain transit, an early surveying device donated by O. C. Lee, Senior Transportation Engineer.

Engineer, Project Development, Branch B, first discovered that material was being gathered for a museum, he was the first person to offer Perovich an old Vernier protractor he had been safeguarding for quite some time. Being concerned that someone might dispose of it, Kimball said he was taking precautions to keep it safe. It was exactly the kind of thing Perovich was looking for. Guessing it to be 40-50 years old, Perovich tried to find information about the protractor by writing to the Mantua Metal Products Company in New Jersey. He hoped the company originally produced it and that they were still in business.

The letter Perovich received back from Mantua Company was enlightening (please see "Letters" column, page 6). The company explained that they originally manufactured the protractor during the war effort, but unfortunately no material on the item is still available. But to the delight of Perovich the company sent an early rolling rule in its original box to add to the growing museum collection. The company has agreed to become part of the Caltrans museum effort and will search their archives for anything related to the endeavor. "You just never know what you might get until you ask," said Perovich.

What Perovich is also particularly keen

on locating are Marchant calculators and spline fish. Marchant calculators are mechanical, hand-crank calculators manufactured by Marchant and other companies. They were used extensively in surveys prior to the advent of electronic calculators in the early 1970's. Spline fish is a set of lead weights about six inches long in the general shape of a fish. Several weights were used to align a flexible plastic spline. This drafting tool was typically used to form a vertical curve when existing field data precluded the use of standard curves. The curve was "splined in." Also of interest are electronically driven mechanical calculators, slide rules and early electronic calculators.

An impressive collection is already being stockpiled by Perovich. Items have already been donated by Bill Koval, Sal Mares, Milton Watanabe, Paul Hsu, Art Salazar, O. C. Lee, Tom Choe, Doug Failing, Ken Sims, Safwat Salahieh, Ralph Ricketson, Cornell Kimball and others. "And Surveys has an even nicer collection of old equipment previously used by the Department," said Perovich.

Everyone is encouraged to donate any items of interest to the future District Museum. For information, or to view items already collected, please contact Mike Perovich (213) 897-0384 or Ralph Ricketson, at (213) 897-9640. •

EXCELLENCE IN TRANSPORTATION AWARDS

Robert W. Sassaman, District Director, proudly presented three Excellence in Transportation Awards for 1999 for outstanding achievements in transportation.

The first award was for excellence on the Rio Hondo Busway Retrofit Project, Major Structures category. "This project was a successful pilot for other retrofit projects and retrofit design," said Sassaman. The Engineering Service Center in Sacramento was also recognized for their involvement in this award-winning project. The award was presented to Doug Failing, District Division Chief, Design; and Cindy Quon, District Division Chief, Program and Project Management on behalf of District 7.

The second distinguished award was presented for excellence on the Harbor 110 Bus Transit Stations Inter-modal Facilities. Sassaman commented, "This project shows a lot of potential for the future of moving people." The Engineering Service Center was also recognized for their involvement. Sassaman presented the award to Doug Failing, District Division Chief, Design; Robert Wong, Senior Transportation Engineer, Office of Public Transportation, Rail and Storm Water; and Cindy Quon, District Division Chief, Program and Project Management, who all accepted the award on behalf of District 7.

The third prestigious award was for excellence on the Adams-Figueroa Historical District Cultural Enhancement Project. Individual awards were presented to Ron Kosinski, Office Chief, Environmental Planning; Mike Perovich, Office Chief, Design, Branch C; Cleve Govan, Senior Environmental Planner; Diane Kane, Associate Environmental Planner (Architectural Historian); and Bill Nagle, Associate Landscape Architect. The District 7 Office of Design also received an award for their valuable contributions. Accepting for Design was Division Chief Raja Mitwasi. In addition, two local agencies were awarded for their involvement in the project, including the Federal Highway Administration and



Accepting the awards for excellence on the Adams-Figueroa Historical District Cultural Enhancement Project are, left to right, front row: Bill Nagle, Diane Kane and Raja Mitwasi with Bob Sassaman. Back row: Mike Perovich, Cleve Govan, Ron Kosinski and Doug Failing.



Left to right: Doug Failing, Cindy Quon, Robert Wong and Bob Sassaman display the distinguished award for the Harbor 110 Bus Stations Inter-modal Facilities.

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Jim Messenger: An Employee With Horsepower!

I'm an animal lover first and a businessman second," said Jim Messenger, Associate Caltrans Administrator, Division of Operations, a 31-year Caltrans veteran. And if anyone else loves animals, especially horses, they will love the city of Norco in Riverside County where Messenger breeds and raises thoroughbred racehorses. The rural city, located about 50 miles east of Los Angeles, has a population of 25,000 people and an amazing 100,000 horses! But more than just a hobby, it is a way of life for Messenger who has been breeding and racing horses for over 30 years.

In addition to his career at Caltrans, Messenger's life revolves around his beloved animals. And he is always looking for other animal lovers and prospective horse owners or breeders who might be



Left to right front row: Messenger's mother, Theresa; Jim Messenger; friend and co-worker Refugio Dominguez; groom; and jockey Matt Garcia; all rejoice in the Winner's Circle at Fairplex Park Racetrack in Pomona. Bystanders behind look on.

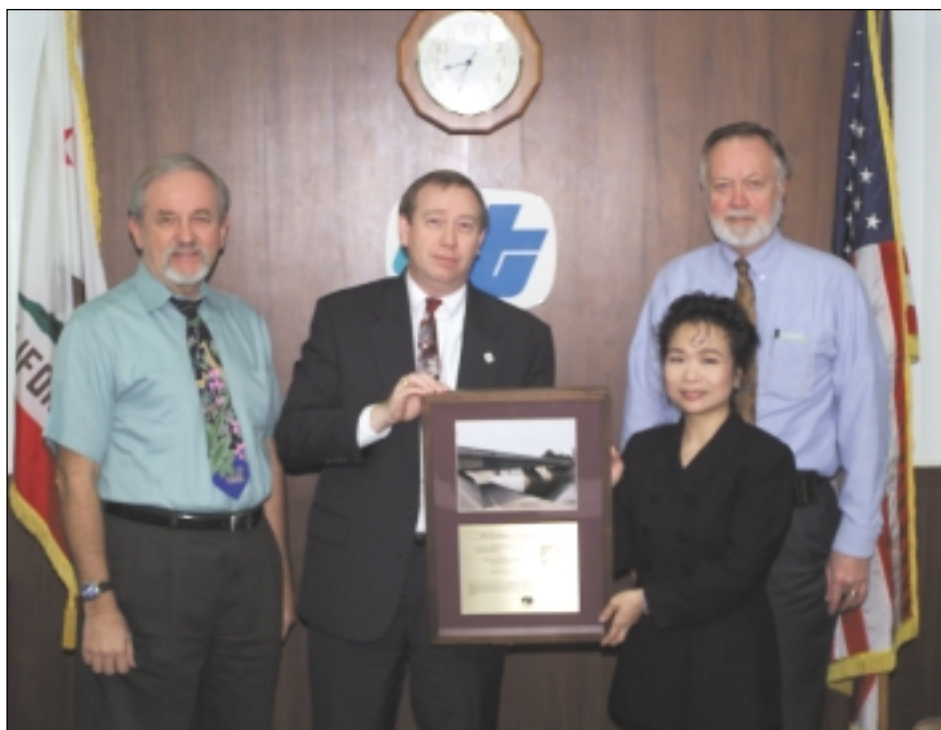
interested in co-ownership of a racehorse. "Hopefully every horse that I breed will be able to race," he said. However he explained that only 50% of all horses bred make it to the racetrack. And of those, only 50% ever win one race.

But through a lot of skill and dedication, the first thoroughbred Messenger ever bred won a major race and made it all the way to the winner's circle! His four-year-old filly, Empress of Reality, was

the big winner at the 1998 Pomona Fair. He owned and raced her mother as well, Empire Star, the first mare bred by Messenger. "It was a very exciting time!" he said.

Messenger explained that fortunately, breeding racehorses is an inexact science. "If horse breeding was an exact science only the truly rich people would have racehorses. This way, everyone has a chance," he said. Horse breeders are always hoping that they have bred the next Secretariat, however some horses may not be fast enough to be successful on the track but may make excellent sport or show horses.

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Left to right: Ron Kosinski, Doug Failing, Cindy Quon and Bob Sassaman with the well-deserved Rio Hondo Busway Retrofit Project award.

Awards

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the Los Angeles Bureau of Street Lighting. Pat Reid, Public Information Officer, Media Relations/Public Affairs, led the successful public outreach campaign and media event portion of this well-received cultural enhancement project.

It took a lot of long hours and hard work to complete these award-winning projects. Congratulations to all persons involved, and thank you for your spirit and dedication to Excellence in Transportation! •



Equal Opportunity Corner

What Is Retaliation?

By Cathi McMahan, Equal Opportunity Officer

John's" supervisor occasionally made racially derogatory comments to "John's" co-worker "Robert Johnson." "John" informed his supervisor that this conduct was unprofessional and that it should cease. He further informed his supervisor that if he continued to harass "Mr. Johnson" he would assist "Mr. Johnson" in filing a charge of discrimination. At the next performance appraisal period, the general manager called "John" into her office and informed him that his supervisor had just evaluated his performance as "below average" on the semi-annual performance review. His performance had been consistently rated as "above average" before this incident. The general manager informed him that, as a result of his performance appraisal, she had no choice but to place him on probation. "John" then filed a charge of retaliation.

What do you think? Is this retaliation?

Title VII prohibits retaliation against an individual because she or he has either: 1) opposed an unlawful employment practice; or 2) made a charge, testified, assisted or participated in an investigation, proceeding or hearing under the statute.

The retaliation provisions provide exceptionally broad protection to individuals who file charges or aid the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) enforcement function. It is the EEOC's policy to expedite the investigation of retaliation charges and seek injunctive relief. An employee is pro-

tected against retaliation for his or her opposition to discrimination as long as the employee has a reasonable and "good faith" belief that the employer's conduct is illegal, even if it turns out that the employee was mistaken as to the legality of the employer's conduct.

The following are examples of protected forms of opposition:

- Threatening to file or to assist in filing a charge, complaint, grievance or lawsuit alleging discrimination.
- Complaining about discrimination.
- Organizing or participating in a group which has as one of its objectives opposition to unlawful employment discrimination.
- Refusing to obey an order because of a belief that it constitutes unlawful employment discrimination.
- Opposing discrimination by persons other than the named respondent.

Note that persons protected from retaliatory conduct are not limited to those who protest discrimination against themselves. For example, the retaliation provision protects:

- Men who protest discrimination against women.
- Whites who protest discrimination against blacks.
- Christians who protest the religious harassment of Jews.
- Employees whose spouses, family, friends or co-workers protest discrimination.

Note also that a false and malicious complaint of discrimination may fall outside the protection of Title VII's retaliation clause and, at a minimum, would deprive the individual of relief. However, if the employer retaliates against that individual, it may still be found to have violated Title VII and the EEOC might pursue injunctive relief to prevent future retaliation.

The following are examples of unlawful retaliation:

- Denial of right to oppose discrimination or participate in the EEO process.
- Harassment and intimidation.
- Denial of employment benefits.
- Discharge, discipline, demotion, reassignment.
- Unjustified evaluations and reports.
- Acceleration of disciplinary action.

So, is "John's" supervisor guilty of retaliation?

"John's" complaint concerning the supervisor's harassment of his co-worker and his threat to assist in the filing of a charge may constitute both opposition to discrimination and participation in the Equal Employment Opportunity process. Even if it turns out that the Supervisor's conduct wasn't severe or pervasive enough to amount to unlawful racial harassment, "John's" opposition to the conduct was protected because he had a reasonable and good faith belief that the conduct was unlawful. If it is found that the poor evaluation that "John" received was related to his complaint about the perceived harassment, unlawful retaliation would be found. •

Quality Corner

Caltrans THE LEADER IN QUALITY TRANSPORTATION

By Joe Gil, District Quality Coordinator

A Customer-Driven Quality Course is available to all interested employees. This eight-hour introductory course gives employees a common "quality" language as well as some basic strategies designed to improve overall quality for employees and Caltrans as a whole. Designed for employees at all levels, this workshop provides a working definition of quality.

The course includes practical tools for identifying hidden customers, reducing rework, measuring the cost of quality, evaluating processes and helping individuals change old habits. Participants learn hands-on quality improvement methods, including how to translate customer requirements into quality measurements, leading the way to improving day-to-day operations.

This course will help to perceive processes and procedures in a different light. Anyone interested in this course can submit their name to their Division Quality Coordinator or call extension 7-0841. •

Inside Seven

In response to a letter from Mike Perovich to the Mantua Metal Products Company in search of documentation and instructions on a 50-year old vintage protractor for the future District Museum (please see story, page 3), is the following.

Dear Mr. Perovich:

Our company did make your protractor. A brief history: Triple "T" Toys was founded by my grandfather, grandmother and her brothers in Mantua, New Jersey in 1926. The company changed its name to Mantua Metal Products shortly thereafter and moved about five miles to Woodbury Heights in 1932 (its present location). The company began making miniature motors for railroad modelers and eventually concentrated exclusively on HO scale (1:87) model railroading products. In 1942, the company ceased manufacture of the train products and devoted all capacity to the war effort making parallel rolling rules, stainless straight edge measuring rules, beam compasses and protractors, just like the one you have! In 1945, Mantua was awarded the Army/Navy "E" Award for Excellence in Wartime Production – a big event for a little town.

Unfortunately, we don't have any documentation related to the protractor. (I have one example in our archives). We do have a number of parallel rolling rules and I will send you one in its original box. I will also send you a copy of an article from a 1984 issue of Model Railroading magazine, which is a good summary of the company's history. I plan to sort through some items in our archives soon and if I find anything relevant to you endeavor, I'll let you know.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me.

Eric N. Tyler, Vice President
Mantua Industries, Inc.
Woodbury Heights, New Jersey



Bits & Pieces.....

Rachel Partida, new District Awards Coordinator, proudly displays one of the many awards and plaques received by District 7 for many outstanding achievements and excellence in transportation.

Rachel Partida, Associate Administrator, Legislative Affairs, has been appointed the new District Awards Coordinator. Among the duties of the District Awards Coordinator is responsibility for informing the District of the various awards programs being sponsored by the department and other various agencies including the private sector. This gives employees a chance to highlight projects and submit them for consideration for the various awards available. An Awards Committee comprised of representatives from each Division meets monthly and shares what awards are available and what the requirements are for submission. The Awards Coordinator reviews submissions to ensure that specific guidelines are met. Pat Reid, Public Information Officer, assists by reviewing text for continuity and accuracy. For additional information, please contact Rachel Partida at (213) 897-6107. •

Deming

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he treated people. There wasn't a bad bone in his body." Sizemore added, "I have known Charles for over 14 years. He was always a really good worker and very diligent about his job. We will all miss him very much."

Deming is the first Caltrans worker to die in the line of duty this year. Two Caltrans workers were killed in 1999. Since 1924, 155 department employees have been killed in the line of duty. He is survived by his wife, Theresa and three daughters, ages 23, 21 and 14. A memorial fund to assist the Deming family has been established by the California Transportation Foundation. (Please see "Director's Chair" column, page 2).

The Caltrans "family" mourns the untimely death of Charles Deming and sends it thoughts, prayers and heartfelt condolences to the Deming family. •

Messinger

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Because of age or injuries Messinger has several horses at his small ranch that are way past their useful years. But they are still an important part of his animal family. He says he knows he should probably get rid of them, but he won't. He said, "Business-wise it is not practical to keep them, but I love my horses and I am attached to them. I helped bring them into this world and it is my obligation to take care of them." He said that for him, raising a horse is just like raising a kid; he cares about them that much.

Currently, Messinger has two three-year-old colts in training for racing which are being conditioned at a special race track training center. He is hopeful that they will be successful this summer. Maybe Messinger and his horses will be seen once again in the winner's circle soon. Best wishes to Jim Messinger, an animal lover and a veteran Caltrans employee with a lot of horsepower! •

What's Cookin' At Caltrans



EARTHQUAKE CAKE

A unique cake that cracks on top when done! From the kitchen of Marivick "Mary" Schulz from Structures Maintenance

April is Earthquake Preparedness Month! Here's a great idea. Take a few minutes to make this easy, unique and delicious "Earthquake Cake." After it's in the oven, set the timer for 50 minutes. While your cake is baking, there's plenty of time to get an earthquake preparedness kit together, or replenished. It's never too late to be prepared!

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 cup coconut | 1 stick margarine |
| 1 cup pecans | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| 1 box German chocolate cake mix | 1 pound powdered sugar |
| 8 ounces cream cheese | |

Spray a 9" X 13" pan with cooking spray or grease with margarine. Sprinkle coconut and nuts on bottom of pan. Prepare cake mix according to directions and pour on top of coconut and nuts. Mix together cream cheese, margarine and powdered sugar. Drop by globs on top of cake mix. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes (may take a bit longer). Cake will crack on top when done! (But also test for doneness with a toothpick).

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